

[James Lemon]

[S241 - LA DUP?]

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis, St.

DATE Sept. 14 1938 SUBJECT American Folklore

1. Name and address of informant-James Lemon—1404 North 67th., Lincoln.

2. Date and time of interview— Sept. 14,—3 P.M. to 5;15 P.M.

3. Place of interview—Residence of informant

4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant. J.S. Sharp—
1404 North 67.

5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you. None

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.,—Front room, well lighted, furnished with bookcase, well filled, chairs and Mr. Lemon's couch, where he spends most of his time. This used to be called a lounge. This arrangement permits one to rest with the head considerably higher than the body. The house is two story and six or seven rooms of older style.

It is located on a corner lot on west slope of hill, one of the highest in city of Lincoln, surroundings good. C15 - 2/27/41 Nebraska

FORM B -PERSONAL History of Informant

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Name OF WORKER Harold J Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis Street

DATE Sept. 14 1938 SUBJECT American Folklore

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT James Lemon 1404 No., 67 Lincoln

1. Ancestry. American, Father borned in Maryland about 1786. Mother about 1792.
2. Place and date of birth. Springfield, Sangamon Co. Illinois, May 19, 1838.
3. Family. Three sisters[md]3 brothers, one a twin, no children, wife, all dead.
4. Place lived in, with dates. Springfield, Ill. 1838-18909 a year or so of this in Menard Co. Ill.—Beaver Crossing—1890-1915, Bethany or Lincoln. 1915 to date.
5. Education, with dates. Sangamon County country school about 1847 to 1855. Bible school, Lexington, Kentucky 1868-70-73.
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates. Farm work to 1867. School teacher 1868-69-70 and 74. Farmer 1875 to 1890-1915.
7. Special skills and interests. Church work, used take part in preaching and services.
8. Community and religious activities. Elder in Christian church (called Campbellite)
9. Description of informant. Short, inclined to stoutness, one arm(right) injured by bone being broken and set crooked years ago. This caused his rejection from the army during the Civil war. Hearing fair, and mentally good despite his ago. His twin brother, John, and he were next the youngest of the family. He is very religious and was always considered a good preacher, tho' he never did this professionally. Seems vigorous. He was married at the age of 56 in Nebraska. There are 5 generations of the family living.

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FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis St.

DATE Sept. 14 1938 SUBJECT American Folklore

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT James Lemon 1404 No. 67th Lincoln, Nebr.

" I was born May 19, 1838 on a farm near Springfield Illinois, Sangamon Co. about 7 miles from the old capital. I voted for Lincoln twice, Grant, Hayes, Garfield, McKinley.

We used horses and also oxen on the farm but no fancy stock, only a few good driving horses. I still have 80 acres of land in Seward Co. Nebr. near Beaver Crossing. I was in Kansas once but did not have to have much education to teach school. After country school, I went to Bible School at Lexington, Ky.

We each gave the teacher \$10.00 to take singing lessons. Everyone had a tuning fork and this was to give us the pitch, I never was much good at it and would start too high sometimes. We studied noted and hymn books.

Song. The Ten Virgins. It is proclaimed, they have a marriage feast. The bridegroom comes at [midnight?]. Have your lamps all trimmed and burning, We'll all go to meet him, When he comes, When he comes.

Story of the Song.

Five of the virgins were wise Virgins.

Five of them were Foolish Virgins.

The Five wise Virgins had oil and the lamps all trimmed.

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And the Five Foolish Virgins did not have oil.

They went to the wise virgins and asked for oil, but they said `Go out and buy the oil from those that have it.'

While they were out the bridegroom came and when the Five Foolish Virgins returned the door was locked and they could not get in so they missed the feast.

Our church did not have any musical pieces, no fiddles, accordians or harps. They did not believe that these things should be found in the church. I gave [\$800?] toward building a new church there where we lived.

I taught school in 68-69-70 part of the year in Sangamon County.

There were no debates or literary society, but spelling school was held Friday afternoons.

Two captains took sides, one stood on each side of the room and they chose the others for their sides.

Each tried to get the best spellers. Then the pronouncer would start and when one on either side missed a word they sat down and were out of the spelling.

`Spelling and cyphering' were the two main studies `One of my teachers once said `You come here and cypher humped up all day. You won't know anything else. You should study Geography.'

We used to play `Town Balls' `4cornered Cat, and `Bull Pen'.

`4 Cornered Cat'

Two men stood at each corner, one with a bat and one caught. The ball was started and thrown toward one corner from another.

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If the batter stroke at one ball, and missed it and the catcher caught it, then the batter gave up the bat and caught. If he hit the ball, then everybody run and if the ball was caught, the catcher could cross out the runner.

` Bull Pen'

Four boys stood inside the square and one in each corner, one of the boys in the corner would throw at the boys inside. If he hit one of them, that boy must throw the ball back. (Informant could furnish no further date on the game.)

We had a number of people in our neighborhood, who believed in spirits and talking to the dead, through a medium. They had a notion that the mediums could call up spirits.

I thought it was a fake doctrine. They would have meetings mostly in homes and claimed to make tables and chairs move around. Also there would be rappings which sounded like a big drop of water falling on the floor. These meetings were attended by lots of people.

They said (the mediums) that they could call up dead people.

Mary G. Eddy came along and wrote a book, about there being no such a thing as pain that the mind governed the body.

I used to take part in church and was an elder. Sometimes I would give a talk after the preacher finished his sermon. Many thought I could say more in five minutes than the preacher could in an hour.

Then I would take the Emblems or Lords supper

They buried my father when I was 8 years old. He was 60 years old and died of consumption. My father was 6 years old when Washington died. He used to pole a flat

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boat and had a hole in his shoulder from pressing against the pole. He would be at the front end of the boat and push and walk back to the end of boat, then go forward again.

At the funeral, they used a two horse wagon, there was no hearse. When the coffin was to be lowered into the grave, they took the lines off from a team, (I don't know whether it was the team, that hauled the [?] coffin) and passed them under the coffin one line at each end with two men. There was a little board, about the thickness of a lath in the bottom of the grave and when the coffin was lowered they could pull the lines out.

I do not think that we had coal oil lamps before the civil war. We used candles, which we moulded ourselves in a candle mold. This was eight tubes in a frame with small holes in the bottom about like a nail. The wicks would be hung from sticks at the top and pulled through the holes at the bottom. This would keep the tallow from running out also. Then melted tallow was poured into these molds, sometimes it was spurn. When this cooled the candles were taken out.

Sometimes, I used to use the fireplace for light to study.

I saw Abraham Lincoln after he was shot. It was in Springfield at the funeral. He lay in state in the court house. Thousands of people passes the bier to look at him.

When I was a boy I had my arm broken. It was never set right and was crooked and I could not use it much. I tried to get in the army of the civil war but they would not take me.

There were 3 boys and 3 girls in the family. My brother John was my twin and he preached the gospel for 50 years. They are all dead now. My brother John lost his leg in the battle of Vicksburg. My wife died at age of 80. I was 97 years old then.

I came to Bethany in 1915. That little creek which runs through where we had our meeting park was named (Dead Man's Run) because in an early day about 70 further up along this creek, the body of a dead man was found. This was out south east of Bethany.

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They never could find out who it was or what caused his death, but maybe he was killed there.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

(Interview with James Lemon.)

Mr. Lemon has some old song books, which he will try to find and probably some other papers and records. Mr. Sharp, who lives with him also has an old hymn book, published in 1850. It is of the Methodist Episcopal church and is very small and thick with many hymns. There is no music to the verse, and he explained that the wording was set to `Long Meter' [md] Short Meter.' and Common Meter.' Thus only three tunes or musical scripts were used to sing all of these an designated above each hymn "L.M." [md] "S.M." [md] "C.M."